



THE LIFE CYCLE OF AN APPLE TREE

SPRING:

As the weather warms up, the leaf buds unfold and flower buds begin to grow on the ends of the twigs. (blossom)

The scent and colour of the petals attracts the honey bee. As the bee collects nectar, it also picks up pollen from the stamens, which it then takes to another flower, depositing the pollen on the sticky stigma. This is called *pollination*.

The pollen grains send tubes down through the styles to reach the ovary where *fertilisation* takes place. The fertilised ovules will become seeds.

SUMMER

The tree is in full leaf now. The petals fall off and the outer wall of the ovary develops into the fleshy white part of the apple. The inner part of the ovary becomes the apple core around the seeds.

The apples grow bigger and gradually change colour. The tree also produces new growth for next year's apples.

AUTUMN

In the autumn, the apples are fully ripe, sweet and brightly coloured. They are now ready for harvesting.

The leaves colour and eventually fall off the tree.

WINTER

In winter, the branches are bare and the tree rests.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Pupils make a picture book explaining the life cycle of an apple tree, with an illustrated glossary.